DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 322 677 EC 231 865

AUTHOR	Berney, Tomi D.; Lista, Carlos A.
TITLE	Project Recurso, 1988-89. Evaluation Section Report and Executive Summary. OREA Report.
INSTITUTION	New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn, NY. Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.
PUB DATE	Mar 90
GRANT	G00852035
NOTE	34p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Bilingual Education; *Disabilities; Elementary Education; *English (Second Language); Hispanic Americans; Inservice Teacher Education; *Limited English Speaking; Parent Education; Parent Participation; *Program Evaluation; *Spanish Speaking
IDENTIFIERS	New York City Board of Education; Project Recurso NY

ABSTRACT

Project Recurso, funded through Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, was implemented at 12 elementary schools under the aegis of the Office of Bilingual Services, Division of Special Education of the New York City Board of Education. The project provided instructional services to 321 special education Spanish-speaking students of limited English proficiency. Project Recurso also provided staff development for 43 teachers and 360 School Based Support Team members, and it provided the parents of participating students with information on special education and classes in English as a Second Language. The project met its objectives in mathematics, teacher and support team development, and parent involvement. It did not meet its objectives in science and social studies. Data were not sufficient to evaluate students' attainment of English language skills. The evaluation report includes two recommendations: provide principals with information related to project activities and goals in order to improve communication between project and school administrators, and improve data collection procedures. (JDD)

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OREA Report

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

PROJECT RECURSO
Grant Number G00852035

1988-89

EC 231865

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EVALUATION SECTION
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March 1990

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

PROJECT RECURSO
Grant Number G00852035

1988-89

Prepared by
The Multicultural/Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit
Tomi Deutsch Berney, Evaluation Manager
Carlos A. Lista, Evaluation Consultant

New York City Board of Education
Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment
Robert Tobias, Director

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PROJECT RECURSO
1988-89

SUMMARY

- Project Recurso was fully implemented. During the 1988-89 school year, the project provided 321 LEP special education students with instructional services in English language development with a content area emphasis. Project staff developed assessment guidelines for LEP special education students. The project offered staff development activities to project teachers and School Based Support Team (S.B.S.T.) members, as well as parent involvement activities.

- Project RECURSO met its objectives in mathematics, teacher and S.B.S.T. staff development, and parent involvement. It did not meet its objectives in science and social studies. Data were not sufficient to evaluate students' attainment of English language skills.

Project Recurso was funded through Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.). It functioned at 12 elementary schools under the aegis of the Office of Bilingual Services, Division of Special Education of the New York City Board of Education. The project provided instructional services to 321 special education Spanish-speaking students of limited English proficiency (LEP students). Project Recurso also provided staff development for 43 teachers and 360 School Based Support Team (S.B.S.T.) members, and it provided the parents of participating students with information on special education and held classes in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) for them.

The project's E.S.L. objective stated that students would improve in English language skills as measured by the Language Assessment Battery (LAB). Students showed an improvement in their English skills, but too few students had both pretest and posttest data for OREA to assess the objective as stated.

The mathematics objective stated that a minimum of 70 percent of the students would demonstrate a mastery of a minimum of three new mathematics skills as measured by tests developed by the Comprehensive Instructional Management System (CIMS). The project achieved this objective.

The science and social studies evaluation objective stated that at least 70 percent of the project students would master a minimum of three new skills consistent with the short-term objectives stated in their Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.s). The project did not achieve this objective.

Teacher training evaluation objectives stated that teachers would receive training in the development of different skill

areas using the transitional bilingual instructional approach, in preparing appropriate materials and programs for LEP special education students, in the interpretation of student assessment and evaluation data, and in applying the new assessment guidelines. The project met these objectives.

S.B.S.T. training evaluation objectives stated that members would receive training in the new guidelines and strategies available for assessment of LEP students. The project met this objective.

The parental involvement evaluation objective stated that by the end of the school year, 60 percent of the parents of project students would have attended parent workshops. The project met this objective.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Provide principals with information related to project activities and goals in order to improve communication between project and school administrators.

- Improve data collection procedures in order to submit data for the entire population of project students.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) 1988-89 evaluation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) Title VII-funded Project Recurso. The Office of Bilingual Services of the New York City Board of Education operated the project, which provided instructional services to 321 special education Spanish-speaking students of limited English proficiency (LEP students) in 12 elementary schools. The project also provided staff development for 43 teachers and 360 School-Based Support Team (S.B.S.T.) members. Project Recurso offered the parents of participating students information on special education.

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

The project's history was described in detail in the 1986-87 and 1987-88 final evaluation reports. A complete description of the project's previous activities and outcomes can also be found in reports of prior years.

The project was transferred to the Office of Bilingual Services and its staff replaced after the 1987-88 school year. This delayed the provision of direct services until the spring semester of the 1988-89 school year.

SETTING

The 12 participating schools (five less than in the previous year) were located in ten Community School Districts (C.S.D.s) in Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. The schools were: P.S. 108 (C.S.D. 4), P.S. 192 (C.S.D. 6), P.S. 93 (C.S.D. 8),

P.S. 28 and P.S. 42 (C.S.D. 9), P.S. 66 and P.S. 198 (C.S.D. 12), P.S. 27 (C.S.D. 15), P.S. 189 (C.S.D. 17), P.S. 174 (C.S.D. 19), P.S. 19 (C.S.D. 24), and P.S. 111 (C.S.D. 30).

PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

Project RECURSO served 329 students, an increase of 21 students over the 1987-88 school year. Most of the students were in grades three through five and were Modified Instructional Service I (MIS I) students needing Bilingual Instructional Services (BIS) I and II. The majority of the students were Hispanic and mildly disabled.

STAFF

The project staff included the director; a teacher trainer; and a bilingual multidisciplinary assessment team of an educational evaluator, and a social worker. The positions of a second teacher trainer and a bilingual psychologist were vacant. The project director, whose position was funded by tax-levy revenues, was also in charge of the Office of Bilingual Services of the Division of Special Education. Tax levy revenue also funded the psychologist's and part of the educational evaluator's positions.

The project director was a doctoral candidate with 11 years of experience in bilingual education. One of the teacher trainers had a master's degree in bilingual education and 17 years of teaching experience. The social worker had a master's degree and 20 years of experience in bilingual education, and the

educational evaluator had a master's and eight years of bilingual education experience. All were fluent in Spanish.

The teacher trainer planned, prepared, and conducted demonstration lessons and workshops for teachers and implemented parent involvement activities. The assessment team visited sites, reviewed existing assessment tools, developed assessment guidelines for LEP students, and recommended techniques for bilingual training materials for S.B.S.T. members working with LEP students. The team also coordinated workshops for S.B.S.T. members.

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Participating students received instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.), Native Language Arts (N.L.A.), and bilingual content area subjects. Project trainers provided teachers with demonstration lessons and also gave guidance in the evaluation of students' English language proficiency and in the design of Individualized Educational Program (I.E.P.) objectives. The project's bilingual multidisciplinary assessment team developed guidelines for the assessment of LEP students and provided consultation services in this area to teachers. Project Recurso also offered activities for parent involvement.

According to the project director, a lack of rapport between project staff and school administrators hampered the delivery of services. She claimed that many of the administrators were reluctant to cooperate in project activities. For example, at P.S. 174, a special education supervisor admitted to reservations

about bilingual special education: he felt that most special education students were limited in achievement, whatever their native language.

REPORT FORMAT

This report is organized as follows: Chapter II describes the evaluation methodology; Chapter III describes the project's implementation and evaluates the attainment of objectives pertaining to implementation; Chapter IV examines the project's attainment of its student performance objectives; and Chapter V offers conclusions and recommendations based upon the results of the evaluation.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation assessed two major areas: program implementation and outcomes. Evaluation questions included the following:

Process/Implementation

- Did the program select students for program participation according to specific criteria?
- Did the project implement the instructional activities for developing English language proficiency as proposed?
- Did project personnel train teachers in the use of new assessment techniques?
- Were workshops implemented on training teachers in techniques and in the preparation of material for meeting the needs of LEP special education students?
- Did project staff complete the preparation of guidelines for non-discriminatory assessment?
- Did project personnel conduct workshops for training S.B.S.T. members in using the assessment guidelines to appropriately identify and assess LEP students in special education?
- Did the project implement activities for improving parental involvement as proposed?

Outcome

- What was the average gain on the English Language Assessment Battery (LAB)?
- What percentage of students improved their performance on the LAB?
- What percentage of participating students mastered at least three new reading and/or English language proficiency skills?

- What percentage of participating students improved their performance on the Degrees of Reading Power test?
- What percentage of participating students mastered a minimum of three new skills consistent with their I.E.P. short term objectives in science and social studies?
- What percentage of participating students mastered a minimum of three new skills in mathematics, as measured by the Comprehensive Instructional Management System (CIMS) methodology?

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Sample

An OREA field consultant interviewed the project director and visited two participating schools, P.S. 111 and P.S. 174, and interviewed the principal of PS 111 and the special education supervisor of P.S. 174. He also observed two bilingual special education classes in each of the schools. OREA provided the program with a student data form for each student. The project returned forms completed by 203 students at nine schools.

Instruments

OREA developed interview and observation schedules for the use of the field consultant. Project personnel used OREA-developed data retrieval forms to report student demographic, attendance, and achievement data. Teachers filled out project-developed questionnaires upon completion of staff development workshops.

Data Collection

The consultant interviewed school and program personnel and observed classes during the month of June, 1989. OREA gave the student data forms to the program director in March and collected them in June.

Data Analysis

OREA used the Language Assessment Battery to assess improvement in English proficiency. Project students were tested at grade level each spring. OREA calculated mean differences between available pretest and posttest raw scores; unfortunately the number of forms submitted by this project was too small to allow for any test of significance. To ensure representative achievement data, OREA computed two sets of statistics: one for those students who had been in the program for at least five months and had attended classes for at least 100 school days, and the second for those who did not meet these requirements. Differences in performance between the two groups were striking.

Limitations

Since all LEP students receive E.S.L. and bilingual services, and all students certified for special education receive special services commensurate with their I.E.P.s, it was impossible to select an appropriate control group. However, the use of two sets of data, as outlined above, served in lieu of a control group.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS: IMPLEMENTATION

Project Recurso's LEP special education students received instruction in English language skills emphasizing content area subject matter. Project personnel developed assessment guidelines for target students. Staff development activities assisted classroom teachers and S.B.S.T. members. The project also provided workshops and related activities for the parents of participating students.

STUDENT PLACEMENT AND PROGRAMMING

Students were eligible for the project on the basis of their Language Assessment Battery (LAB)* scores and certification by the Committee on the Handicapped (C.O.H.) as needing special education services. Project Recurso used LAB results to place students in one of the program's two instructional tracks, BIS I or BIS II.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

All project students attended classes in E.S.L. and N.L.A. Content area instruction was given in Spanish for BIS I students and in English for BIS II students. Content area subjects included mathematics, science, and social studies.

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*The Language Assessment Battery (LAB) was developed by the Board of Education of the City of New York to measure the English-language proficiency of non-native speakers of English in order to determine whether their level of English proficiency is sufficient to enable them to participate effectively in classes taught in English. Students scoring below the twenty-first percentile on the LAB are entitled to bilingual and E.S.L. services.

English as a Second Language

At P.S. 111, the OREA field consultant observed a BIS I E.S.L. class of seven students. The class was working on Charlotte's Web, by E.B. White. Pairs of students read to each other, completed exercises in vocabulary, and drew charts describing characters and events in the story. The charts served to summarize and explain the main elements of the story. According to the teacher, this teaching strategy was designed to encourage an orderly interaction among students.

At P.S. 174, the field consultant observed a BIS I class of nine students. Students read a poem aloud, repeating it as if it were rap music. The teacher asked the students about the meanings of words and sentences, and the lesson concluded with a discussion on the poem's content.

The OREA consultant also observed a BIS II class of nine students at P.S. 174. During the first part of the class, students worked independently, cutting out pictures of fruits and vegetables from magazines. During the second half of the lesson, the class tried to match the pictures to words the teacher had put on the blackboard.

Content Area Subjects

The field consultant observed a BIS II social studies class at P.S. 111. The eleven members of the class discussed recent student uprisings in China. The teacher asked thought-provoking questions such as, "What did protesting students want?" and described the different types of government China has had. The

class focused on the concepts of democracy, freedom, and individual rights.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Staff Development: Teachers

The program objectives for staff development for teachers stated that:

- Targeted classroom teachers will receive workshops on the development of different skill areas using the transitional bilingual instructional approach.
- Teachers will receive workshops in techniques and in the preparation of materials and programs appropriate for use with LEP special education students.
- Teachers will receive training in the interpretation of student assessment and evaluation data.
- Teachers will receive training in the new assessment guidelines.

Teacher trainers provided target teachers with model lessons. This service was initially spotty, but a second trainer was hired in the spring and each site could then be visited once a week. In their model lessons, the teacher trainers stressed the transitional bilingual instructional approach. The education evaluator also occasional offered workshops; topics included language acquisition and E.S.L. methods and strategies.

In May 1989, Project Recurso teachers and S.B.S.T. members participated in a three-day conference at which Jim Cummins, from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, spoke about "More Possibilities, Less Failures: Instructional Intervention for LEP Students." The conference focused on the appropriate assessment of minority special education children. Jim Cummins

also trained participants in the interpretation of assessment and evaluation data as well as in the proposed evaluation guidelines he was helping the project develop.

With these activities the project met its staff development objectives for teachers.

Staff Development: S.B.S.T.

The objective for S.B.S.T. staff development stated that:

- By June 1989, 60 percent of the targeted S.B.S.T.s will be trained in new guidelines and strategies for the assessment of LEP students.

Many of the S.B.S.T.s attended Jim Cummins's conference, where they learned about the guidelines and assessment for LEP students. S.B.S.T.s were also offered a workshop presented by the social worker and educational evaluator on cultural and linguistic concerns in the assessment process. These development activities were open to all S.B.S.T.s. At least 220 of the targeted S.B.S.T. members received the proposed training. Project Recurso met the S.B.S.T. staff development objective.

Development of Assessment Guidelines

Although there was no objective in this area, Project Recurso's Bilingual Multidisciplinary Assessment Team developed guidelines for the assessment of LEP students. The assessment encompassed the psychological, educational, and social history of the students suspected of having a disabling condition. The guidelines included a discussion of the problem of inappropriate

classification of students as disabled when their difficulty is solely one of deficiency in English.

Parental Involvement

The program objective for parental involvement stipulated that by June 1989, a minimum of 60 percent of the parents of students participating in project Recurso will:

- Receive workshops acquainting them with the policies and procedures for the schools and Division of Special Education.
- Receive workshops on the assessment procedure and the formation of the I.E.P.s.
- Receive workshops on various areas, including community resources, working with their children, etcetera.
- Receive workshops assisting them in developing their own English language skills.
- Receive workshops explaining the new assessment guidelines.

Parents attended regularly scheduled meetings, had individual conferences with teachers to discuss their children's progress, and participated in workshop sessions.

Parents attended the Special Education Multicultural Multilingual Parent's Conference, organized by the Division of Special Education, Office of Bilingual Services, in conjunction with the Division of Multicultural and Multilingual Education (DOMME). This one-day institute for parents of students with special needs focused on disabled minority children. It gave parents, agencies, and service providers opportunities to network and learn more about available services.

Project records of parent attendance indicated that Recurso met its parental involvement objective.

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS: OUTCOMES

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

English Language Skills

The evaluation objectives for English language development stated that:

- The 329 participating students will improve in English language skills as measured by the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) from the spring of 1988 to the spring of 1989.
- A minimum of 70 percent of the students participating in Project Recurso will increase their performance on the LAB listening, speaking, and writing subtests.
- A minimum of 70 percent of the students participating in project Recurso who are learning to read English will increase their performance on the Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.) test.*
- At least 70 percent of the students participating in project RECURSO will demonstrate a mastery of three new skills consistent with the student's I.E.P. short-term objectives in reading and English language proficiency.

While LAB data were available for 140 students who took the pretest and 120 students who took the posttest, matching data were available for only 64 students. All of these 64 students improved their scores.

Data were available for 91 students on the pretest and 133 in the posttest of the D.R.P. Matching data were available for only 24 students, and these also improved their mean scores.

Data that would allow OREA to assess the fourth objective were not available.

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* The Degrees of Reading Power test was developed by the College Board to provide information about student reading ability on the same scale used to describe the difficulty of textbooks.

In summary, although the data available was meager and did not allow for a definite assessment of the objectives, project students seem to have improved their English language skills. Had the data been sufficient, it is probable that the project would have achieved its English objectives.

Content Area Subjects

Mathematics. The objective for mathematics was:

- By June 1989, a minimum of 70 percent of the students participating in project Recurso will demonstrate a mastery of a minimum of three new mathematics skills as measured by the Comprehensive Instructional Management System (CIMS.)

The project provided data for 126 students, 103 of whom had been in the program for at least five months. Table 1 shows that 74 percent of these students mastered three or more skills, whereas only 38 percent of those with less time in the program achieved this objective. Thus, the impact of the program is clearly shown. The project met its mathematics objective.

Science and Social Studies. The objective for the content areas of science and social studies was:

- By June 1989, a minimum of 70 percent of the students participating in project Recurso will master a minimum of three new skills consistent with the student's I.E.P. short term objectives for science and social studies.

Project Recurso provided data for 129 students in science and 130 students in social studies. Tables 2 and 3 show an appreciable difference between the performance of students with more than five months in the program and that of students with

TABLE 1

MATHEMATICS SKILLS MASTERED

Time in Program	Students with Three or More Skills Proposed	Students with Three or More Skills Mastered	Percent of Students who Mastered Three or More Skills
Five or more months	92	68	73.9
Fewer than five months	21	8	38.1

16

- More students receiving program services for at least five months mastered at least three mathematics skills than did students receiving services for a shorter period of time.

TABLE 2

SCIENCE SKILLS MASTERED

Time in Program	Students With Three or More Skills Proposed	Students With Three or More Skills Mastered	Percent of Students who Mastered Three or More Skills
Five or More Months	47	30	63.8
Fewer than Five Months	15	1	6.7

17

- More students receiving program services for at least five months mastered at least three science skills than did students receiving services for a shorter period of time.

TABLE 3

SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS MASTERED

Time in Program	Students with Three or More Skills Proposed	Students with Three or More Skills Mastered	Percent of Students who Mastered Three or More Skills
Five or more months	48	28	58.3
Fewer than five months	16	1	6.3

18

- More students receiving program services for at least five months mastered at least three social studies skills than did students receiving services for a shorter period of time.

less time in the program. However, the former group still fell short of the objective in both areas. Only 64 percent of the science students and 58 percent of the social studies students mastered three or more skills. The project did not meet its objective in this area.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Recurso was a three-component program designed to strengthen bilingual special education. In its fourth year of operation, it offered English language instruction to special education LEP students, training to bilingual special education teachers and S.B.S.T. members, and workshops to teachers and parents of project students.

The project met its objectives in mathematics, staff development for teachers and S.B.S.T. members, and parent involvement. It did not meet its objectives in science and social studies. Data were insufficient to assess the development of English skills objectives.

In addition to its objectives, Project Recurso's bilingual multidisciplinary assessment team developed guidelines for the assessment of LEP students. This was one of the project's most valuable accomplishments. The guidelines covered the assessment of the psychological, educational, and social background of the student suspected of having a disabling condition. The guidelines also discussed the problem of students being classified as handicapped when their difficulties were solely due to a lack of English skills.

One of the biggest problems facing the project was the lack of rapport between the Recurso staff and school administrators. The director said that many administrators were reluctant to cooperate with project activities. The marginal role of special education in some schools is a possible explanation for the

project's lack of acceptance. Whatever the cause may be, project staff should address this problem.

Another problem was the lack of sufficient data. While the project reported that it had served 321 students, it submitted forms for only 200 or fewer. This limited OREA's ability to assess objectives. In addition, for whatever reason, test scores were available for only a small number of students. It is not known whether students entered the program late or did not take both pre- and posttests for other reasons.

The conclusions, based on the findings of the evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Provide principals with information related to project activities and goals in order to improve communication between project and school administrators.
- Improve data collection procedures in order to submit data for the entire population of project students.

NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

JOSEPH A. FERNANDEZ
CHANCELLOR

PROJECT RECURSO
1988-89

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

- Project Recurso was fully implemented. During the 1988-89 school year, the project provided 321 LEP special education students with instructional services in English language development with a content area emphasis. Project staff developed assessment guidelines for LEP special education students. The project offered staff development activities to project teachers and School Based Support Team (S.B.S.T.) members, as well as parent involvement activities.

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The project's E.S.L. objective stated that students would improve in English language skills as measured by the Language

*This report is based on the final evaluation of "Project Recurso 1988-89" prepared by the OREA Multicultural/Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit.

Assessment Battery (LAB). Students showed an improvement in their English skills, but too few students had both pretest and posttest data for OREA to assess the objective as stated.

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